



# THE EXAMINER



Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Twentynine Palms, California

Volume 11, No. 3

*"Serving with Pride and Professionalism"*

March 2003

## People of the Year, Quarter Honored at Naval Hospital

The Officers, Civilians and Sailors of the Year and Quarter for the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital were recently selected.

Ensign Brian Hower, Medical Services Corps, of the Clinical Services Directorate was selected as Officer of the Year.

His citation reads in part, "Over the past year, you performed your demanding duties as Head Patient Administration Department with the highest level of professionalism and dedication. You directed the team



efforts of the Medical Records Review Committee, revitalizing their efforts and completely rewriting the command instruction, ensuring absolute adherence to federal and state regulations and all applicable JCAHO requirements. You worked diligently to resolve long-standing staffing issues in your department. You forged relationships with Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Healthcare Support Office San Diego, and the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to shore up staffing initiatives. As a result of your efforts, a new Marine Liaison was appointed and a new Medical Records Coder was brought onboard. You spearheaded the implementation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. As a direct result of your efforts, the command has met or exceeded all implementation goals. You consistently tackled difficult issues and diplomatically shepherded multiple significant process changes. You skillfully coordinated 28 decedent affairs cases and consistently ensured the highest respect for the deceased and their families."

Petty Officer 1st Class Archie Clary of Branch Medical Clinic China Lake was selected as both the Hospital and Marine Corps Air Ground Task Force Training Command's Senior Sailor of the Year.

His citation reads in part, "Petty Officer



Clary planned and organized the preparation for the College of American Pathologist inspection. He implemented process improvements to increase efficiency in the Laboratory and streamlined the Quality Assurance Program. As a result, the Laboratory Department received the highest grade of accreditation with distinction, an

*Please see PEOPLE on page 6*

## Highlights...

During calendar year 2002, 84 sailors and 13 Marines tested positive for the HIV virus. The rate of newly identified sailors who test positive has risen every year since 1999 and is the highest rate in the military.

*See page 2*

Last month in our patient safety corner, we introduced the first of six national patient safety goals—improving the accuracy of patient identification. To this end, we have adopted and standardized the practice of using the patient's full name and the last four digits of the sponsor's social security number.

*See page 3*

Spring is here and the snakes and spiders and such are waking up and out looking for food, new homes or that special someone to set up 'nest keeping' with...into your home. *See page 5*

The Examiner can now be viewed online at: [www.nhttp.med.navy.mil](http://www.nhttp.med.navy.mil)

For comments drop an e-mail to: [d.barber@nhttp.med.navy.mil](mailto:d.barber@nhttp.med.navy.mil)

## Expectant and New Moms Unite!

By Janet Hamilton, MSW  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

Because of recent deployments, many women have been left to cope with the challenges and wonders of pregnancy and new motherhood on their own, without the support of their husbands. They want to ask questions and to share their excitement but they don't know where to turn - so they just stay at home - alone. What fun is that?

Each week, a group of expectant and new moms get together to learn, to talk, to share, and most importantly to meet others in similar situations. Many are new to the military. Many are having their

first baby. Many have husbands who are deployed. These women learn that they are not the only ones feeling alone or a little overwhelmed. They provide encouragement and emotional support to each other. They develop new friendships.

As one member states "I would like to recommend this program to other expectant moms, especially those with deploying husbands. The atmosphere and support are great and the faculty is extremely knowledgeable and this is a great support group".

We would like to encourage all expectant and new moms to come to this casual and fun group. Meetings are on Thursday afternoons from 1230 to 1400 in the Mental Health Clinic conference room. For any questions, call 830-2584.

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*Here's to your health...*

# HIV and AIDS: Are You at Risk for Infection?

*Martha Hunt, MA, Health Promotions Coordinator  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital*

**D**uring calendar year 2002, 84 sailors and 13 Marines tested positive for the HIV virus. The rate of newly identified sailors who test positive has risen every year since 1999 and is the highest rate in the military. Remember, if you contract the HIV virus, your life is changed in every possible way for the worst. Your career in the military is ended, your lifespan is shortened and your quality of life will begin to diminish every year from then on. If you had kids before contracting HIV, you won't live to see your kids and grand-kids grow up.

You joined the Navy or Marines to serve your country, see the world, or to get an education and you risk throwing it all away if you do not have all the facts about HIV infection. Here is some information you need to protect yourself and your loved ones.

What is HIV and how can I get it? HIV - the human immunodeficiency virus - is a virus that kills your body's "CD4 cells." CD4 cells (also called T-helper cells) help your body fight off infection and disease. HIV can be passed from person to person if someone with HIV infection has sex with or shares drug injection needles with another person. It also can be passed from a mother to her baby when she is pregnant, when she delivers the baby, or if she breast-feeds her baby.

What is AIDS? AIDS - the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome - is a disease you get when HIV destroys your body's immune system. Normally, your immune system helps you fight off illness. When your immune system fails you can become very sick and can die.

What do I need to know about HIV? In 1984 scientists proved that HIV causes AIDS.

Anyone can get HIV. The most important thing to know is how you can get the virus.

## *How can you can get HIV?*

By having unprotected sex- sex without a condom- with someone who has HIV. The virus can be in an infected person's blood, semen, or vaginal secretions and can enter your body through tiny cuts or sores in your skin, or in the lining of your vagina, penis, rectum, or mouth.

By sharing a needle and syringe to inject drugs or sharing drug equipment used to prepare drugs for injection with someone who has HIV.

From a blood transfusion or blood clotting factor that you got before 1985. (But today it is unlikely you could get infected that way because all blood in the United States has been tested for HIV since 1985.)

Babies born to women with HIV also can become infected during pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding.

You cannot get HIV:

By working with or being around someone who has HIV.

From sweat, spit, tears, clothes, drinking fountains, phones, toilet seats, or through everyday things like sharing a meal.

From insect bites or stings.

From donating blood.

From a closed-mouth kiss (but there is a very small chance of getting it from open-mouthed or "French" kissing with an infected person because of possible blood contact).

How can I protect myself?

Don't share needles and syringes used to inject drugs, steroids, vitamins, or for tattooing or body piercing. Also, don't share equipment ("works") used to prepare drugs to be injected. Many people have been infected with HIV, hepatitis, and other germs this way. Germs from an infected person can stay in a needle and then be injected directly into the next person who uses the needle.

Don't have sex. Or, if you do make this decision, have sex only with one partner who you know doesn't have HIV and is only having sex with you. The more sex partners you have, the greater your chances are of getting HIV or other diseases passed through sex.

Use a latex condom every time you have sex, including oral and anal sex. If you are allergic to latex, there is a polyurethane (a type of plastic) condom that you can try. There also is a condom that women can use to protect themselves. Don't use lambskin condoms - they might not protect you against HIV.

Don't share razors or toothbrushes because of the possibility of contact with blood.

How do I know if I have HIV or AIDS? You might have HIV and still feel perfectly healthy. The only way to know for sure if you are infected or not is to be tested. Talk with a knowledgeable health care provider or counselor both before and after you are tested.

You are more likely to test positive for (be infected with) HIV if you:

Have ever shared injection drug needles and syringes or "works."

Have ever had sex without a condom with someone who had HIV.

Have ever had a sexually transmitted disease, like Chlamydia or gonorrhea.

Received a blood transfusion or a blood-clotting factor between 1978 and 1985.

Have ever had sex with someone who has done any of those things

Also remember that many Navy Ports of call have incredibly high HIV infection rates among the citizens of that country. Some Asian and African ports of call have HIV infection rated of 50 percent or more. Why did you join the Navy or Marines? If you contract HIV, it was all for nothing.

## Upcoming Diabetes Class Schedule

**T**he Internal Medicine Clinic of the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital offers a series of "Diabetes Self-Management Classes."

The schedule of classes is as follows:

**Alternative Medicine Therapies (Vitamins, Herbs, Diet Supplements) & Diabetes.**

Thursday, Mar. 20.

**Oral Diabetes Medicines.** Thursday, April 17.

**Exercising to Improve Diabetes.** Thursday, May 22.

**Taking Care of Your Feet.** Thursday, June 19.

All classes are held in the Family Practice Clinic Classroom 3.

Anyone with diabetes or interested in learning more about diabetes is welcome to attend.

For more information call Lt. Julie Lundstad at 830-2175.

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The Examiner welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the publication. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month for the following month's edition. Any format is welcome, however, the preferred method of submission is by e-mail or by computer disk.

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## Patient Safety...

## An Essential Element of Patient Safety is Effective Communication

By Lt. Daniel Anthony, NC, PACU  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

Last month in our patient safety corner, we introduced the first of six national patient safety goals—improving the accuracy of patient identification. To this end, we have adopted and standardized the practice of using the patient's full name and the last four digits of the sponsor's social security number. This standardized method of identifying our patients is working out well and is now used throughout the hospital.

The second goal of patient safety is to improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers. Often, a simple visit to a provider for a check-up will involve contact with central appointments, administration, Hospital Corps staff, nursing, and providers. More involved work-ups can include pharmacy, surgical services, dietary, and TRICARE. With so many different services offered under one roof, it becomes imperative that each specialty communicate clearly with the other. For example, coordination of care between our dia-

betic educator and the hospital dietician is essential when assessing the needs of a newly-diagnosed diabetic.

Additionally, the hospital has adopted a "read-back" policy for providers who give telephone orders. The nurse receiving the phone order writes down the order and then repeats it back to the provider for confirmation. (Interestingly, the process of repeating back orders has long been the standard practice on our ships at sea and in port.) For us at Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms, by writing down and then repeating back an order, the chance of misunderstanding words or doses that sound similar is greatly reduced.

The second half of our efforts focuses on updating a list of approved abbreviations for use throughout the hospital. In this way, lengthy orders and charting can be reduced without sacrificing clarity.

Our commitment to patient safety grows ever stronger as we strive to provide the best and safest healthcare for all our beneficiaries. We invite all of our beneficiaries to ask questions when you visit us and to make suggestions.

## Critic de jour!...

## It's That Time of Year Again to Revisit Spider Safety

By Martha Hunt, M.A. Health Promotions Coordinator  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

Spring is here and the snakes and spiders and such are waking up and out looking for food, new homes or that special someone to set up 'nest keeping' with. The best form of critter prevention is to stay away from them, to eliminate all inviting, cozy spots around your home such as piles of lumber and debris, and to seal all cracks and crevices that they can use to crawl into your home.

The two scariest spiders in this area are the Black Widow and Brown Recluse spiders. While it's correct that there are no true Brown Recluses here in Morongo Basin, his first cousins live here and at first glance can be mistaken for a true Brown Recluse. This cousin of the BR also causes necrotizing bites and so should also be viewed as potentially dangerous.

Both the Black Widow and Brown Recluse spiders prefer nice dark, quiet, undisturbed places such as out buildings, wood or debris piles, closets, attics, etc. and they usually only wander out of these spaces when they are hungry and on the prowl. In fact, most spider/human contact is purely accidental on both parts, resulting in the spider biting out of fear. Most spider bites happen when they are trapped in clothing, shoes or bedding and the spider and the human both panic.

Spider bites are rarely fatal, and when handled properly, can be easily treated as well. Black Widow bites feel like a pin-prick and progress in pain and swelling until the whole area is red, warm, and swollen. The pain may spread to other parts of the body and symptoms may also include nausea, sweating, convulsions and, in rare cases, even death. However, the only people seriously at risk from Black Widow bites are the very young or

old and those individuals with compromised immune systems. If you are bitten by a Black Widow spider, call your health care provider or poison control number immediately and seek help.

A bite from a Brown Recluse may go unnoticed for several hours before turning red, swelling and beginning to blister. On rare occasions, a severe bite from a Brown Recluse can cause the skin to not just blister up, but to die back and leave an open sore. Healing of the Brown Recluse bite may take a month or longer and scar leave a scar where the sore was. As with the Black Widow bites, Brown Recluse bites should be promptly treated to prevent further health risks.

Please see CRITTER on page 8

**BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP**

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# Hard Chargers...



*Lt. Cmdr. Ronald Bajet, left, of the Laboratory Department, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal from Capt. Lynda Salmond, Commanding Officer, Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital.*

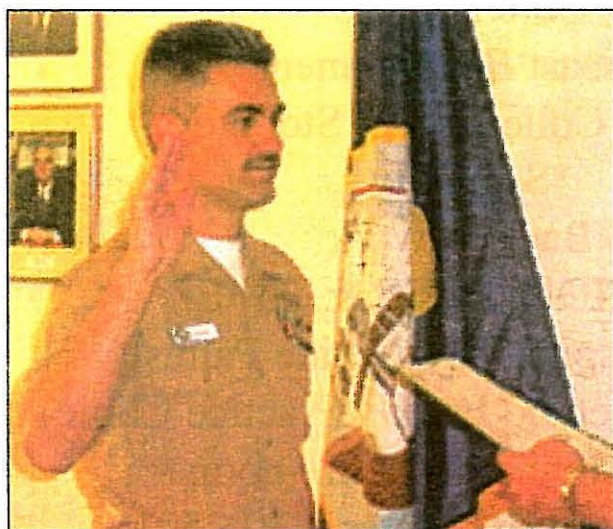
*Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew DeFazio, right, of the Surgical Services Department, receives a Letter of Commendation from Capt. Salmond.*



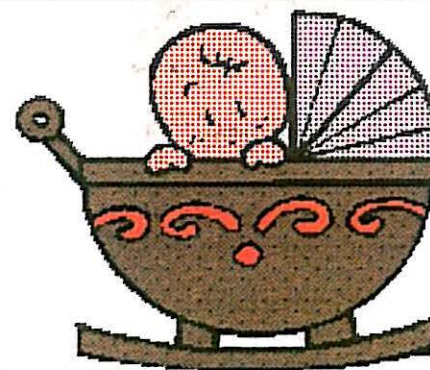
*HN Joel Cornejo, right, of the Pharmacy Department receives his Honorary Desert Rat Certificate from Capt. Salmond.*



*Lt.j.g. Michelle Douglas, left, of Military Sick Call takes the oath during her recent promotion ceremony.*



*Lt.j.g. Matthew Green, left, of the Clinical Services Directorate, takes the oath during his recent promotion ceremony.*



## JOURNEY INTO MOTHERHOOD

**Feeling Overwhelmed, Scared, Alone, Sad, Frazzled?  
Or just want to meet other new moms?**

**You're not the only one!**

**Come join us to talk, share, and meet others.  
Support Group for Expectant and New Moms  
Finding Solutions through Education and Support**

**Where: Conference Room - Mental Health Clinic  
Every Thursday afternoon**

**Time: 12:30 to 2 p.m.**

**Group leaders: Beverly Dexter, PhD 830-2935  
Janet Hamilton, MSW 830-2584**





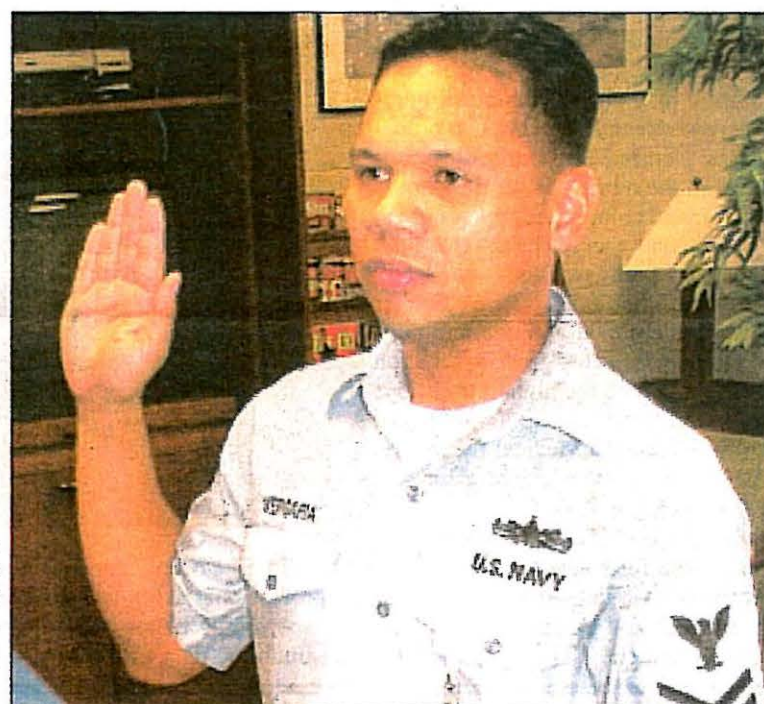
*Lt. Troy Henderson, left, of Occupational Health Department, receives a Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal from Capt. Salmond.*



*Cmdr. Richard Mondragon, right, of the Laboratory Department, takes the oath during his recent promotion ceremony.*



*SK2 James Herford, left, of Materials Management receives a Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal from Capt. Salmond.*



*MS1 Philo Vergara, right, of the Nutrition Management Department takes the oath of reenlistment.*



*HMI Danny Morissey, left, of the Radiology Department receives a Letter of Commendation from Capt. Salmond.*



*Lt. Cmdr. Sharleen Romer, right, of the Surgical Services Department, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal from Capt. Salmond.*



# PEOPLE...

Continued from page 1



unprecedented achievement in command history. In addition, he aggressively counseled and mentored over 40 junior Sailors, promoting personal and professional development and significantly increased the command's retention rate to more than 90 percent."

Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Realine Bautista of the Inpatient Nursing Department was selected as the Junior Sailor of the Year.

Her citation reads in part, "Professional achievement as leading petty officer, Inpatient Nursing Department, Naval Hospital, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California from January 2002 to December 2002. Petty Officer Bautista supervised, trained, developed and counseled 30 junior corpsmen. She consistently displayed compassion and professionalism. By reorganizing the supply systems of two diverse inpatient units, she revised the replace-

ment of high-volume specialized medical equipment and supplies, and tracking of supply utilization, resulting in improved patient safety. She was the driving force behind instituting a treatment room in the Family Practice Clinic. She independently achieved the addition of a check-in cubical, additional treatment area, and streamlined check-in procedures for the Pediatrics' Department. Her selfless volunteerism was evident in the numerous off-duty hours she devoted to the command color guard, school physical examination rodeo, and the Shriner's Hospital. Her superior performance of duty resulted in her selection as Junior Sailor of the Year. Petty Officer Bautista's exceptional professional abilities, initiative and loyal dedication to duty reflected great credit upon herself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Beverly Kudebeh, the Hospital's Medical Evaluation and Performance Reporting System Coordinator was selected as Senior Civilian of the Year.

Her citation reads in part, "While assigned as Medical Evaluation and Performance Reporting System (MEPRS) Coordinator, Resource Management Department, you demonstrated exceptional professional skills and abilities. You were superbly efficient and insightful in continually resolving problems in an intense and ever-changing environment. Through extensive fact-findings, data processing, and



active participation with Naval Medical Information Management Center, you succeeded in attaining the highest possible data quality at a Naval Hospital. You applied your astute knowledge in interpreting MEPRS instructions and found three different errors that resulted in retraction of statements and changes in procedures at BUMED level. Your unselfish attitude and inventive approach to your daily duties had a positive impact on your department and were noted factors in the command meeting every reporting deadline."

Susan Compton the Hospital's Professional Affairs Coordinator was selected as the Civilian of the Year.

Her citation reads in part, "As Secretary, Radiology Department and Professional Affairs Coordinator, you independently researched and acquired information for the development of daily, weekly, monthly and yearly radiology reports. You served as the departmental Composite Health Care System (CHCS) Super User and were responsible for all CHCS related functions, including training of radiology personnel. You were responsible for the command's Credential Review and Privileging Program, a position that is essential in order for the command to meet its mission of delivering quality patient care. Your meticulous attention to detail, coupled with outstanding interpersonal skills ensured that all providers' credentialing records were current."



Lt. Susan Union, Nurse Corps, of the Emergency Medicine Department, was selected as the Officer of the Quarter.

Her citation reads in part, "Over the past quarter, you performed your demanding duties as Division Officer, Emergency Department with the highest level of professionalism and dedication. You were recognized by your peers for exceptional administrative skills and your ability to calm staff and patients during any stressful situation. As the Emergency Department's Clinical Educator, you assured your staff were well trained and competent. Your diligence prepared your staff to give outstanding care to over 3,600 outpatients. You personally recertified 50 hospital personnel in Basic Life Support and were one of the key people in the development of a nursing orientation program."



Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Thomas of the Branch Medical Clinic China Lake was selected as Senior Sailor of the Quarter.

His citation reads in part, "As Leading Petty Officer and Pharmacy Technician, Branch Medical Clinic China Lake, you implemented changes that significantly improved the documentation and accountability of pharmaceuticals. Your flawless review and processing of 12,000 prescriptions, combined with the inventory and update of crash carts and antidote

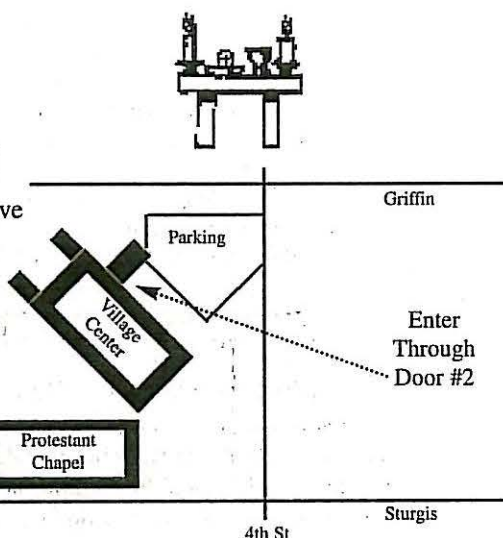
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## 1030 Service of Holy Communion

Every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.  
Village Center (Bldg 1551)  
In the Meditation Chapel  
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- \* A 50-minute child friendly service
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- \* A weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist

For more information contact:  
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Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital  
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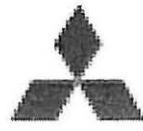
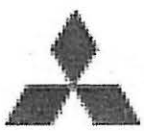
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## PEOPLE...

*Continued from page 6*

locker medications, exemplified expertise in your field. You completed an inventory and update of the clinic crash carts and antidote locker medications. In addition, you efficiently coordinated the Basic Life Support training and certification of 100 personnel in the clinic and throughout Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake. Your efforts greatly enhanced staff readiness and the relationship with local commands."

Petty Officer 3rd Class Janis Brandes, of the Patient Administration Department was selected as the Junior Sailor of the Quarter.



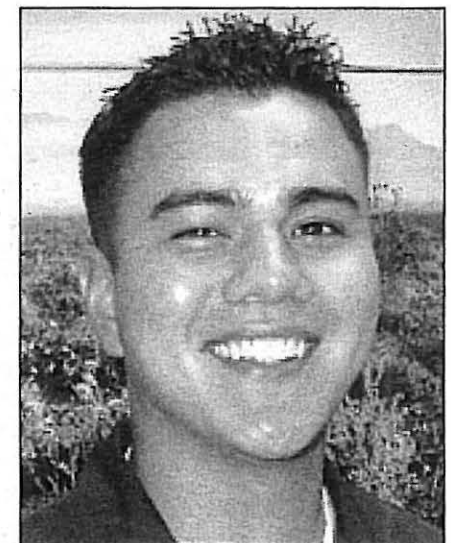
Her citation reads in part, "As an extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic member of Patient Administration, you distinguished yourself by rapidly becoming an expert in all areas of the department. You used this expertise to flawlessly complete over 35 family screenings for overseas assignments. A true team player, you volunteered several hours to "Toys-for-Tots", ensuring children in the local community benefited from this vital program. Additionally, as a volunteer Instructor during the Alcohol Awareness Month, you educated shipmates on the alternatives to drinking and driving."

Hospital Corpsman Gregory Hogue of the Laboratory Department was selected as the command's first Blue Jacket of the



Quarter.

His citation reads in part, "As Assistant Supervisor, Laboratory Accessioning Section, you consistently performed your duties in an exemplary manner. Your customer service skills and dedication to patient care resulted in your section receiving numerous positive customer satisfaction questionnaires, several specifically complimenting you. As Assistant Supply Petty Officer, you maintained a \$4K monthly OPTAR and consistently performed weekly inventories, ensuring all required material was onboard, so there would be no interruption of services. Through your professional knowledge, you trained 10 staff corpsmen in phlebotomy, increasing the Laboratory Department's overall efficiency."



*Please see PEOPLE on page 8*

**Kick the habit and learn to become tobacco free!**

The Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital Health Promotions Program offers tobacco cessation classes in the hospital.

Classes are offered at two convenient times of noon and 5:30 p.m.

To sign up, call Health Promotions at 830-2814.

The next set of tobacco cessation classes will start Mar. 18. Call now before it all goes up in smoke!



## PEOPLE...

*Continued from page 7*

Sam Guerrero, Warehouse Lead of the Materials Management Department was selected as Senior Civilian of the Quarter.

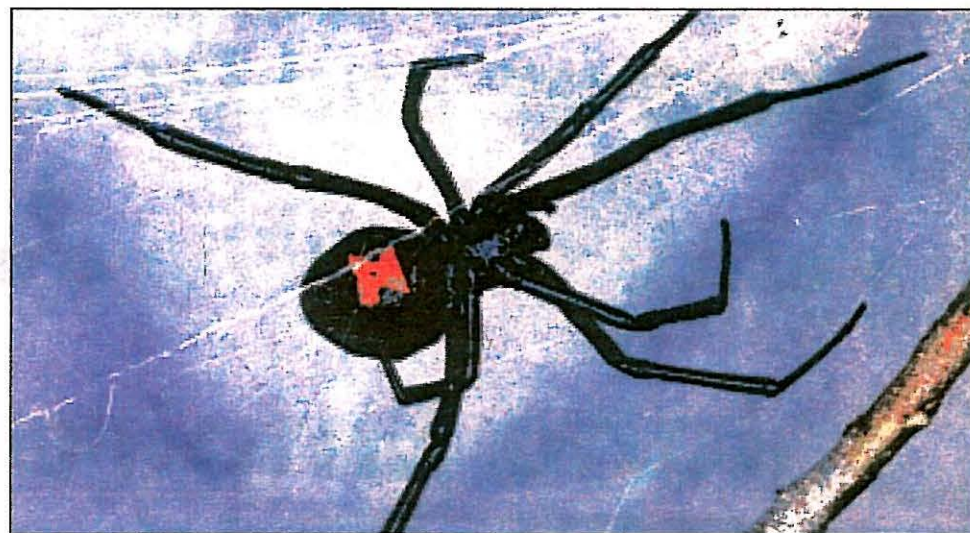
His citation reads in part, "While assigned as Warehouse Lead, Materials Management Department, you superbly performed a variety of tasks, including receipt, storage, delivery, issue, and shipment of medical and non-medical supplies and equipment. The professional knowledge and abilities you displayed were evident in your expert management of the budget and day-to-day operations of the warehouse. You ensured all tasks were completed on time and were always willing to go the 'extra mile.' You stepped up to the plate when the department was undermanned, undergoing a stressful A-76 study, and managing late funding issues. Active in the community and command, you served on the Disaster Readiness and Hazardous Materials committees and volunteered as a



coach for youth baseball and football."

Ann-Marie McKenna of the Maternal-Infant Nursing Department was selected as the Civilian of the Quarter.

Her citation reads in part, "As a Ward Clerk, Maternal-Infant Nursing Department, you mastered all the clerical duties associated with managing the busiest inpatient unit at the hospital. You performed administrative tasks supporting over 130 outpatient clinic visits per month. Your proper coding of outpatient visits increased the Ambulatory Data Management provider compliance rates to 100% completion for three consecutive months. You also liaised with the Central Appointments, Family Practice Clinic, Pediatric Clinic and Postpartum Care Clinic to ensure appointments were scheduled for over 80 families prior to their discharge, which facilitated a smooth transition for follow-up care. Your ability to remain calm, poised, and professional when handling multiple tasks was invaluable, especially when census fluctuations caused potential disruption to the unit."



## CRITTERS...

*Continued from page 3*

The best prevention for spider bites of any kind is to reduce the risk to begin with. Vacuuming the corners of the rooms in your home and sweeping out the eaves of your roof will remove spiders, webs and the nests that they have built. You can also discourage spiders from becoming cozy in your home by eliminating clutter in storage areas and garages, by making sure all screens and doors are tight fitting when closed, and keeping shrubs and flowers away from the outer walls of your home.

Pesticides can be used carefully around the base of your home, but always follow directions exactly and keep them away from kids and pets! You can also get electronic pest repellers that emit ultra-high frequency sound waves that not only scare off spiders, but the bugs that spiders eat. As an added bonus, electronic repellers keep rodents such as mice and rats away and that keeps the snakes that eat them away too.

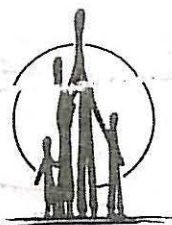
Remember, the best way to avoid a spider bite is to avoid the spiders in the first place. A home that is free of clutter and well sealed from the outdoors will be less inviting to the spiders as well as to the other little bugs they eat.

*"Step into my parlor" said the spider to the fly.*



**Judy Moore**  
Yucca Valley resident  
& Community Services Director  
at HI-Desert Medical Center's  
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